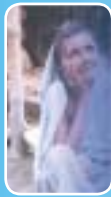


Population Headliners



No. 314

September-October 2006

Funded by UNFPA

ISSN 0252-3639

ESCAP

Opening new avenues for global cooperation in international migration

The President of the United Nations General Assembly said the body's recent session on international migration served to underscore how today's integrated world can serve a positive engine of change.

The High-level Dialogue on International Migration, held on 14-15 September "revealed the potential and opportunities that globalization presents as a force for improving the lives of millions of people", Assembly President Sheikh Haya Rashed Al Khalifa said at the opening of this year's general debate.

In her closing remarks, she noted that, nearly all of the 130-plus Governments present expressed the wish to continue an international dialogue on the issue of migration in some form or another. In particular, many "embraced the Secretary-General's proposal of establishing a Global Forum on Migration and Development and the offer made by the Government of Belgium to host the first meeting of the Forum next year", she said.

The Dialogue drove home several key points: that international migration is a growing

phenomenon and can be a positive force for development in both countries of origin and countries of destination, provided it is supported by the right set of policies; and that it is important to strengthen international cooperation, bilaterally, regionally and globally.

The Secretary-General proposed the establishment of a standing forum which Governments could use to explore and compare policy approaches. Such a Government-led consultative forum on migration and development would not produce negotiated outcomes or recommendations. Rather, it would make new policy ideas more widely known, add value to existing regional consultations, and encourage an integrated approach to migration and development at both the national and international levels.

The High-level Dialogue was the first Assembly meeting to focus directly on migration, with an emphasis on identifying ways to maximize the development benefits of migration and to reduce difficulties.

(Source: UN News Centre, 19 September)

AFPPD Chairman sheds light on upcoming International Parliamentarians Conference

Ahead of the Third International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (IPCI) to take place on 21-22 November, Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, MP (Japan) and Chairman of AFPPD unveils his expectations of the high-level meeting, exclusively for *Population Headliners*:

• **What are the key contributions of parliamentarians in the success of population programmes in Asia-Pacific over the past 25 years?**

Mr. Fukuda: "Twenty-five years ago, when the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) was established, the developing countries in Asia and the Pacific were experiencing rapid growth of their populations, unprecedented in human history. The rapid population growth was retarding national efforts to achieve economic and social progress and was putting considerable strain on the economies to

provide sufficient education, health care and employment.

The parliamentarians have played a pivotal role in enacting policies and legislation and in earmarking resources for the formulation and implementation of national family



Mr. Fukuda

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

Contents

↳ Maternal mortality focus of South Asia MDG forum	2
↳ APPJ celebrates 20 th anniversary	3
↳ Low prevalence doesn't mean HIV prevention is low priority	4





Asia-Pacific Population Journal celebrates 20th anniversary

From “Population and Urbanization” by Rafael M. Salas then Executive Director of UNFPA, the lead article in the very first issue of the *Journal*, to “Reaching the MDGs: Why Population, Reproductive Health and Gender Matter” by Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA’s current Executive Director published in the 20th anniversary special issue, the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* has documented knowledge and thinking in the field of population and development in the region for over 20 years.

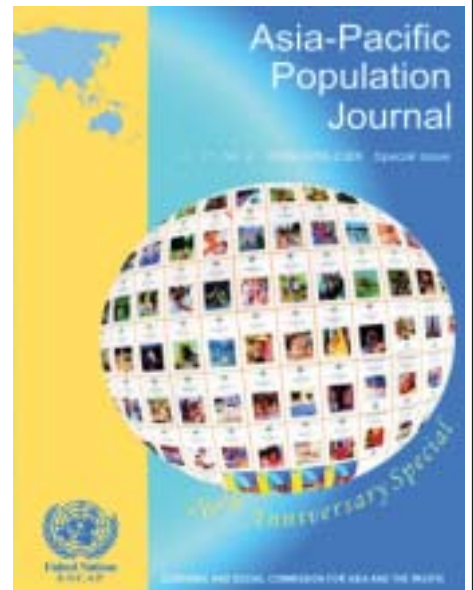
In print since March 1986, the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, published by ESCAP with financial support from UNFPA, is a highly respected publication in which leading experts share their evidence-based findings, theories and opinions on population and development in Asia and the Pacific. The *Journal* is disseminated free of charge to an audience of policy makers, programmes planners and researchers in over 75 countries. The web-based version of the *Journal*, accessible in full text at www.unescap.org/appj.asp recently enjoyed a surge of popularity with about 180,000 visitors a month on average in 2006, representing a fivefold increase since 2005.

The *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* marks its 20th anniversary this year. Among other events to mark

this landmark anniversary, a special commemorative issue has been prepared which focuses on 20 years of progress in the field of population and development. It received contributions from prominent experts in the field, including above-cited Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA and award-winning demographers John C. Caldwell from the Australian National University and Mercedes B. Concepcion from the University of the Philippines.

Numerous thought-provoking and forward-looking articles on a wide range of topics, from family planning to population ageing, breast-feeding and population communication have filled the history of the *Journal*, contributed by world-class authors as well as by uncelebrated researchers in smaller countries of the region. Various landmark conferences such as the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference held in Bali in 1992, the milestone International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the recent Fifth APPC (Bangkok, 2002) also provided guidance and inspiration over the years.

“The various issues of the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* published over the past two decades are a faithful mirror of the evolving trends and issues discussed in the field of population and development in the Asian and



Special 20th anniversary issue released

Pacific region”, commented Keiko Osaki, Editor and Chief, Population and Social Integration Section, ESID, ESCAP. “The *Journal* has gone from strength to strength and carved an undisputed niche for itself in the field of population and development”.

The commemorative issue of the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* will be launched during a reception on 20 November in Bangkok, on the eve of the Third International Parliamentarians’ Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action to take place at the United Nations (see page 1).

Maternal mortality the focus of South Asian forum on MDGs

Improving maternal health and reducing child mortality were high on the agenda as more than 100 experts from across South Asia gathered on 11-12 October in Kathmandu for a meeting on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The South Asia MDG Forum brought together government officials, business leaders, academics and members of the media from seven countries to help formulate a regional roadmap for attaining the Goals. The Forum was set up by ESCAP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Government of Nepal.

Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of ESCAP told the gathering

that while South Asia had made commendable progress in lifting millions out of extreme poverty, it still lagged on other key measures.

“The majority of countries in South Asia are off track for more than one third of their indicators”, Mr. Kim said, stressing the importance of promoting gender equality, ameliorating maternal health and reducing child mortality.

“South Asia has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the world. Action must be taken now”, said Mr. Matthew Kahane, UNDP Resident Representative in Nepal.

Delegates attending the Forum brought forward a 30-point action plan on how to achieve the MDGs by 2015. The action plan identified key actions

by Governments, donors and other stakeholders to meet the MDGs within the next two to five years.

The recommendations include, among others, the provision of compulsory and free education up to secondary level; targeted interventions to reduce malnutrition and child and maternal mortality; legal protection against gender discrimination; inclusion of socially vulnerable groups in the development process through affirmative actions; strengthening sub-regional cooperation for free-flow of life-saving drugs and medicines, and facilitating intercountry migration.

Strengthened and ongoing partnerships between the media, civil society groups and Governments to reach these targets were also underlined.



Chairman sheds light... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

planning programmes. These efforts have contributed to reduce fertility and curb population growth.

Since the adoption of the Programme of Action (PoA) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the parliamentarians have become more aware and active in supporting efforts to improve reproductive health, promote gender equality and achieve the goals of the ICPD PoA and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As a result, in many countries of Asia and the Pacific, the National Committees of Parliamentarians on Population and Development have been revising or formulating population policies and programmes to conform to the right-based approach recommended in the ICPD PoA. They have been instrumental in keeping the ICPD agenda on the national political and legislative agendas.

Parliamentarians are also actively engaged in supporting policies and programmes to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, address the reproductive health needs of adolescents and deal with the unseen scourge of domestic violence.

Parliamentarians actively encourage the involvement and participation of NGOs and the private sector and promote south-south cooperation for the exchange of experience and lessons learned".

• What do you expect to be the main outcome of the 2006 IPCI?

"I sincerely hope that the deliberations among the members of parliaments from around the world during this Conference will help to refocus and reshape our thinking and programmes to meet the global, regional and national needs and challenges faced in working towards the Goals of the ICPD PoA and the MDGs. I hope the Conference will also provide an invaluable opportunity to learn from one another, promote better understanding and enhance south-south cooperation".

• Are there any particularly

critical issues you hope will be tackled?

"Though significant progress has been made during the past two-and-a-half decades, the challenges that we face are many and the agenda of the Conference reflects our priorities. We need to examine our role and impact in meeting the commitments made at the ICPD and at the five- and ten-year review gatherings. In this regard, we have to assess the progress made in achieving universal access to reproductive health services, in improving gender equality, and in bridging gender gaps. It is also clear that resources for the implementation of the ICPD PoA have fallen considerably short and we have to identify the steps that are needed to increase those resources.

Parliamentarians are a changing group. In Asia, most of them come from rural areas or small towns where most people live. As leaders in their communities, they play an important role. Hence, it is crucial to ensure that they remain motivated to keep the momentum that we have gained over the years going".

• What is the likely future direction of population policies in the region?

"Population policies and programmes have to be dynamic and will have to respond to current as well as anticipated future challenges. Continued emphasis and support is needed to further improve reproductive health, particularly of young people who are most vulnerable and comprise the largest cohort. Policies and programmes must continue to recognize that gender equality is central to achieving the ICPD and the MDGs.

However, in the not too distant future, more and more countries will enter the new demographic regime characterized by population ageing and increased migration. These trends, together with increases in the level of income, will have significant impacts on the environment and the quality of life and will need to be part of future population policies and programmes".

People in the headlines

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) has announced on 25 October the nomination of **Mr. Richard Mann** as its new Deputy Director-General. As SPC's Noumea-based Director, Mr. Mann will oversee the Social Resources Division, which includes human development, public health, statistics and demography programmes, and its support services. Mr. Mann will also have special responsibility for SPC's relationships with the Government of France and the French territories.

From UNFPA Headquarters in New York, news has come of the retirement since late September of **Mr. Satish Mehra**, Senior Programme Advisor after many years of dedicated services to the Fund starting almost from its inception in 1969. We wish Mr. Mehra a very healthy, happy and productive retirement!

International Institute for Population Sciences marks Golden Jubilee Year

As part of the celebration of its Golden Jubilee year, the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai is organizing an international conference on Emerging Population Issues in the Asian and Pacific Region: Challenges for the 21st Century, that will take place in Mumbai from 10 to 13 December.

IIPS was established in 1956 with the joint sponsorship of the United Nations, Government of India and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust to serve as the regional centre for training and research in population studies for countries in Asia and the Pacific.

For more information, please visit www.iipsindia.org and look out for more coverage of this conference in upcoming issues of *Headliners*.



“Low prevalence” does not mean HIV prevention is low priority

Low rates of HIV infection must not lead to complacency, representatives of 10 Asian and Pacific “low prevalence” countries agreed recently.

Countries where HIV is still relatively rare have a window of opportunity to avoid more serious epidemics, cost-effectively. But it is essential that they invest in targeted prevention efforts, and actively counter the stigma of HIV and the taboos that hinder addressing risky behaviours.

This was the conclusion of the First Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support in Low Prevalence Countries, held in late October in Ulaanbaatar, where experts from Governments, civil society and international organizations shared experiences and strategies for strengthening national AIDS programmes.

The Government of Mongolia organized the four-day meeting in partnership with UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and UNAIDS. Other participating countries, many of which were represented by high-level health officials, included Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Maldives,

Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

“Whether a country is low prevalence or high prevalence, the risk factors are the same, and HIV prevention efforts need to be focused to be most effective”, said J.V.R. Prasad Rao, Director of the UNAIDS Regional Support Team for Asia and the Pacific.

Participants agreed that targeted HIV prevention efforts should focus on people most at risk of acquiring HIV within the countries, including sex workers and their clients, injecting drug users, men who have sex with men and young migrants.

Efforts should also be made to raise general awareness about AIDS to help break down AIDS-related stigma and discrimination. Despite a few notable successes in containing the epidemic, infections continue to rise throughout Asia and the Pacific region and have



A family in Mongolia pausing for a picture (Photo courtesy of mongoliaphoto.com) Mongolia will set up action against HIV/AIDS.

reached concentrated levels in a number of countries.

Delegates attending the Conference adopted the Ulaanbaatar 2006 Call for Action, highlighting the priorities of an effective response to the epidemic. The document urges countries to improve surveillance systems. National AIDS action plans, it states, need adequate funding, ambitious but realistic targets, high-level political commitment, and the full involvement of civil society.

(Source: UNFPA press releases, 27 October)

Dynamic migration process unfolding in Asia

“The Regional Dimension of International Migration and Development” was the topic of a panel discussion co-hosted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Regional Commissions Office, New York and held on 13 September. Taking place in the framework of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (see page 1), the panel discussion contributed to the above-cited Dialogue and built on the regional approaches to international migration and development, as well as the various regional consultative processes developed for the past decade.

The United Nations Regional Commissions have played an increasingly active role in supporting regional research and

facilitating regional policy dialogue on the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development.

The emergence of regional approaches to migration management is partly due to a growing realization that while international migration today is characterized by growing complexity, most migration still occurs on a regional basis and is characterized by very distinct patterns stemming from each region’s specific characteristics and the shared interests of groups of countries.

According to the regional fact sheets prepared for the Dialogue, several countries in East and South-East Asia are becoming important sources of migration in the region, while also starting to become destinations for migrants. Countries

becoming major hosts include China; Hong Kong, China; India; Malaysia; the Republic of Korea; Singapore; Thailand and following the lead of Japan. Meanwhile, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam remain important origins for migrants, both for the region and beyond.

Of nearly 3 million Asian workers that left their home countries between 1995 and 2000, about 40 per cent stayed in the region, the fact sheets noted, quoting an August 2006 report by the International Labour Organization. The ILO gauges the total amount of money remitted home by Asian migrant workers at USD 40 billion in 2003.

(Sources: IOM/UN News release, 13 September; Regional Fact Sheet, Asia)



South Asian planners and policy makers attend training on population and development nexus

As a component of the UNFPA funded project on "Population, Development and Poverty: Emerging Challenges", ESCAP, in cooperation with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) organized the Training Workshop on Population, Development and Poverty in South Asia. The Workshop was held in Mumbai from 30 October to 3 November. Sixteen participants from seven South Asian countries, namely Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the Workshop, representing various ministries and institutes.

The five-day Workshop provided participants with information, knowledge and resources on issues such as population, development and poverty nexus; mortality and development; fertility transition and the role of socio-economic development and family planning programme; population ageing; migration and development; population-RH-poverty linkages; prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in South Asia; reproductive health and development with particular focus on HIV/AIDS; and knowledge management in population and



Participants and resource persons of the Training Workshop gather for a group picture. Front row, fifth from left is Prof. P.N. Mari Bhat, Director of IIPS.

development.

These various sessions were conducted by ESCAP staff members and resource persons from IIPS and UNFPA Country Technical Services Team (CSTs) in Bangkok and Kathmandu.

The Workshop also tried to equip participants with basic information on and methodology for population and sectoral projections (such as health, education, economy and urbanization), making use of the software SPECTRUM. It focused in particular on the computer modeling and forecasting tools DemProj and

RAPID, for demographic projections and socio-economic implications of population growth, respectively. A one-day field trip to the Ward Office, Municipal Corporation, Andheri East, Mumbai, allowed participants to find out about the highly successful vital registration system implemented in Greater Mumbai, which claims over 99 per cent coverage.

According to the participants, the Training Workshop was very useful in enhancing their understanding of the interlinkages between population, development and poverty, as well as of the use of population variables in development planning.

Over 23.5 million people "Stand Up Against Poverty" on World Poverty Day

On 15-16 October, 23,542,614 people in over 80 countries around the world set a new Guinness World Record for the largest number of people standing up against poverty. In Asia and the Pacific alone, more than 18 million took the pledge against poverty eradication in multiple locations over 24 hours.

The Stand Up record attempt, an initiative of the United Nations Millennium Campaign in partnership with the Global Call to Action Against Poverty was set in time for the United Nations International Day for Poverty Eradication on 17 October.

Millions across the state of Madhya Pradesh, India; tens of thousands of cricket fans across Jaipur, India; rock fans across Manila, Philippines;

millions of school children across Nepal and Pakistan; hundreds of thousands across Bangladesh as well as a huge gathering at the largest mosque in Indonesia all joined together for the world record attempt.

At each event, people stood up and pledged their solidarity with the world's poorest people and demanded that Governments take urgent action to end poverty and inequality and to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Campaign's Executive Coordinator Eveline Herfkens said: "Together we have set an incredible record for the largest number of people standing up to demand action on poverty. But the record we really want to break is the



At ESCAP, over 300 persons participated in the Stand Up.

world's record of breaking promises and ignoring the poor. We don't want to record numbers of people dying of poverty every year. This is the great issue of our times, let us become great by dealing with it decisively". (Source: Millennium Campaign, press release, 18 October)



UNITAID to help global fight against HIV/AIDS

Describing it as a “life-saving initiative”, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently launched UNITAID, an international drug-purchasing facility that will provide medicine and treatment against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis for the poorest people of developing countries who otherwise could not afford them.

“UNITAID can use its purchasing power to leverage price reductions for quality drugs and diagnostics, and accelerate the pace at which they are made available. It can provide a stable and continuous source of financing for health-care programmes, particularly in low-income countries,” said Mr. Annan at the launch in New York.

“And it can help reassure developing countries of the long-term commitment of the international community. In this way, UNITAID provides a real and immediate tool to help scale up access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB”.

UNITAID will be funded by innovative financing mechanisms such as a contribution on air tickets, a WHO official said, while the

Secretary-General congratulated the Governments of Brazil, Chile, France, Norway and the United Kingdom for leading the way in developing the initiative.

“UNITAID is deeply encouraging news in the world of financing for

development. This international facility for the purchase of drugs is a shining example of an innovative source of funding that can help us reach the Millennium Development Goals”.

(Source: UN News Centre, 19 September)

New releases on population ageing

The UNFPA country offices in China and Thailand, with technical assistance of the Country Technical Services Team (CST) for East and South-East Asia based in Bangkok, recently released two advocacy brochures on population ageing; *Population Ageing in China: Facts and Figures* and *Population Ageing in Thailand: Prognosis and Policy Response*.

The Chinese brochure is bilingual (English/Chinese), while the Thai one was prepared in both the Thai and English languages, in two separate versions. The brochures were intended as part of the East and South-East Asian regional inputs to the United Nations’ five-year review of the implementation

of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in 2002).

Note: The two brochures are available online from <http://cst.bangkok.unfpa.org>



Population Headliners is issued six times per year by the Emerging Social Issues Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Building, Rajadamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand. **The newsletter is produced with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Project No. RAS5P203.** The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country/territory nor do they imply endorsement by the United Nations of any firm, product or licensed process. More information about the activities, products and services of UNESCAP in the field of population and development is available online through the Internet at <http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/>

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
UNITED NATIONS BUILDING, RAJADAMNERN NOK AVENUE
BANGKOK 10200, THAILAND

ESID/PSIS 88(4)

PRINTED MATTER

BY AIRMAIL